
American Embassy Newsletter for American Citizens – Volume 4: December, 2006

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1. Pandemic Flu Preparedness DVD

The State Department's Office of Medical Services recently prepared an excellent DVD for State Department employees to help them prepare for a possible influenza pandemic (e.g., a pandemic of bird flu or some other serious strain of influenza). Now the State Department has agreed to make this DVD available to private American citizens. The program contains useful information, including suggestions on how to avoid contagion at the office and other public places, and how to safely care for an ill family member in the home. Even if you do not have time to watch the DVD at this time, consider obtaining a copy for future reference in the event of an influenza pandemic.

If you would like a copy of the DVD, you can pick one up at the American Citizen Services Unit (please see our working hours below), or we can mail you a copy. To request that a copy of the DVD be mailed to you, please write to acsnd@state.gov, providing your full mailing address in India.

2. 2006 Federal Elections -- the Aftermath.

Many Americans overseas participated in the recent U.S. Federal Elections by requesting and returning absentee ballots. Americans are often confused by the many different state requirements and deadlines for requesting and returning ballots. Within each state, each county (or in some case city) has a voting official responsible for that jurisdiction. Some voting officials are prompt about sending out ballots and voting information, while others are less so.

If you voted (or tried to vote) in the election, how was your experience? The Overseas Voter Foundation is conducting a survey to obtain comments from overseas voters regarding difficulties they faced in exercising their right to vote. If you would like to participate in this on-line survey, please visit <http://www.ovf-rava.org>.

The Federal Voters Assistance Program (FVAP) is also interested in your feedback. Although they are not conducting a formal survey of voters' experiences, they welcome comments on difficulties faced by overseas voters. You can send your comments to vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

Your comments will help to improve the manner in which overseas voters participate in the 2008 Federal Elections!

3. Airline Check-in Procedures.

Travelers may have noticed that airlines have made a number of changes to airline check-in procedures in the last several months on account of various security-related threats towards flights headed to the United States. For example, on certain flights, travelers have been

restricted on what items they can carry on board (most recently, limitations on liquids). Also, recommended check-in times have been extended for certain periods following a security threat. Often, restrictions are imposed for a period of time, and subsequently relaxed.

The Embassy advises travelers to carefully monitor their airline's check-in procedures to avoid any unpleasant surprises at the airport!

4. Disease Outbreaks.

Americans who live in or visit India should keep apprised of disease outbreaks that occur from time to time. Certain areas in India have regular seasonal outbreaks of serious diseases such as dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis. Other diseases, particularly mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and chikungunya, remain a frequent concern as well.

Your primary sources of information for updates on disease outbreaks as they occur from time to time are the websites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) and the World Health Organization (www.who.int). Generally, the Embassy does not issue warden messages relating to disease outbreaks, except in unusual circumstances, instead relying upon the expertise of these organizations on matters relating to health. The CDC website also provides information that is useful to anyone living in or traveling to India to maintain good health, such as advice on safe food and water handling, and suggestions for appropriate vaccinations.

5. Cultural Events in Delhi.

Sharon Lowen, Coordinator of Indian Studies at the American Embassy School in New Delhi, periodically distributes the "Cultural Event Alert" via e-mail listing cultural events of interest in Delhi, including dance, music, films, lectures and art exhibits. In order to be included on the mailing list for these informative e-mails, please send an e-mail request to Ms. Lowen at slowen@aes.ac.in.

Americans interested in concerts this holiday season may wish to hear the Capital City Minstrels, a choral group comprised of singers of various nationalities. The schedule of their free holiday concerts, all of which will take place in New Delhi, is as follows:

Friday, December 8, 7 pm at Hungarian Information and Cultural Center (1A, Janpath)
Sunday, December 10, 11:45 am at Sacred Heart Cathedral (on Gole Dakhana circle)
Tuesday, December 12, 7:30 pm at India Habitat Center (Lodhi Road)

6. The American Corner in Chandigarh.

The American Corner in Chandigarh is a partnership between the U.S. Embassy New Delhi and the T.S. State Library in Chandigarh. A window on life and culture in the United States, it provides information about political, cultural, educational and social trends in the United States to the general public including students, teachers and professionals in Chandigarh and the nearby areas.

The Corner has a collection of books, CD-ROMs, videos, DVDs, and U.S. journals. It also has Internet access. The Corner provides reference services and can refer queries to the American Library in New Delhi for more in depth information. The American Corner also hosts a variety of programs, panel discussions, films etc.

The hours are Monday to Friday 10:00 – 5:30 and Saturday 10:00 – 1:30. Americans are most welcome to visit!

Contact information:
Mr Parveen Khurana
Director, American Corner
2nd Floor
T.S. Central State Library
Sector 17, Chandigarh
Tel: 0172-2702565
E-Mail: americancornerch@yahoo.in

7. ACS Location & Hours and Upcoming Holidays

Our hours: The American Citizen Services Unit is open to the public from Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. We are available outside of these hours for emergency services. To contact us, call (011) 2419-8000, ext. 4249 or 8562 or 4040 or 4032. You can also e-mail us at acsnd@state.gov.

Upcoming Indian and American holidays on which the Embassy will be closed are December 25 (Christmas Day), January 1 (New Year's Day), January 5 (Guru Govind Singh's birthday), January 15 (Martin Luther King's birthday), January 26 (Republic Day), February 19 (Presidents' Day) and March 27 (Ram Navami). The Embassy is always available for emergency services for American citizens.

If you believe you may have missed a recent "warden message" sent to American citizens in India, all recent warden messages issued by the Embassy are available on the Embassy website at http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/warden_information.html.
